

A 4473.9.31.
SERMON
Preached in the
PARISH-CHURCH
OF
ALDENHAM
In the County of
HERTFORD,
ON

Thursday, April 16. 1696.

BEING

95 The Day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God for
Discovering and Disappointing a Horrid and
Barbarous Conspiracy of Papists and other
Trayterous Persons to Assassinate and Murder
His Most Gracious Majesty's Royal Person;
and for Delivering this Kingdom from an In-
vasion intended by the French.

Published at the Request of the Inhabitants of the said Parish.

By PETER NEWCOME, M. A.
and Vicar of Aldenham in Hertfordshire. K

L O N D O N,

Printed for John Wyatt at the Rose in St. Paul's Church-
Tard, 1696.

MEMORIAL OF THE HERITAGE OF



the Day of Thursday, the 1st of June, 1880, at the
 following and adjoining lands and
 the State of North Dakota, and the
 and for the purpose of the same.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

The Dedication
TO THE
INHABITANTS
Of the PARISH of
ALDENHAM,

Who were Hearers of this Discourse.

IT was no little Surprize to me; after I had Preached the following Discourse to you, to meet you all drawn up in a Body in the Church-Yard, so importunately requesting this Publication, so much besides either my Inclination or Judgment. But, as hereby you seemed willing to manifest your zealous Loyalty to the present Government, and offered me an Opportunity of testifying the Sincerity of my Affection to you (who are wholly this Governments and Yours) so have I turned my Back upon all Objections. (which I then urged upon you, and found afterwards

The Dedication.

multiplying very fast and thick upon me) to comply with your Desires.

If this Publication may contribute any Service to the Government, and find as kind an Acceptance from the Press as it did from the Pulpit, (which is what I know better how to Wish than Hope for) To God be the Glory, to You the Thanks, and to my self I own nothing more due, but the Charity of Prayers; which I desire none of my Readers to refuse or neglect, for the Success and Encouragement of the weak Endeavours of an Unworthy and Obscure

Labourer in Christ's Vineyard,

P. N.

NEHEM.

NEHEM. IX. 17.

-----*And in their Rebellion appointed a Captain, to Return to their Bondage-----.*

UPON a Solemn Day of Humiliation, as the Remembrance of God's Mercies is thought, here in this *Chapter*, a proper Introduction to a more humble Confession of the Peoples sins; so upon a solemn Day of *Thanksgiving*, a sensible Reflection on sin, can prove no less proper Introduction to a more gratefull praising of God for his Mercies. For as the greatness of Mercy aggravates the guilt of Sin, so the greatness of *Guilt* inhaunces no less the greatness of Mercies. And therefore, as the *Jewish Levites*, on their *Fast-day*, help forward their *Humiliations* by their Praises; so is it not improper for us now, on this our Day of *Thanksgiving*, to promote our *Gratitude* by our humble Acknowledgments. And as they introduced their *Confession of Sin*, by recounting God's Mercies to them; so we may fitly introduce our *Gratitude* by reflecting on our Sins against God.

And to this Argument doth the *Text* referr; containing an Acknowledgment of their Fore-fathers Guilt in an Instance that our present Age hath appropriated, and occasioned these our Thanksgivings for its no less remarkable Disappointment.

The

The Passage refers to the Story we read in *Numb.* 14 2, 3, and 4th Verses. The People of *Israel* (having been miraculously delivered out of *Egypt*, and provided for in the Wilderness, and ready to enter into *Rest*, the promised Land) upon the return of the *Spies*, and their false Report, they fall a murmuring, and not only fall out with the Providence of God towards them, but Plot *Rebellion* against the Government God had in Mercy placed over them, and in a wonderful manner made instrumental for their late Deliverance: For *all the Children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron; and the whole Congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the Land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this Wilderness. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this Land, to fall by the Sword, that our Wives and our Children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a Captain, and let us return into Egypt. And* (accordingly our Text tells us, that) *in their Rebellion they appointed a Captain* [at least, purposed to do so, which in the Eyes of God is as criminous as if they had done so] *to return to their Bondage.*

This was the *Plot* by them contriv'd, but by God graciously disappointed in their own Ruine and Destruction.

So that it hence appears to be no new thing (tho' very unreasonable and wicked) for a People eminently saved and rescued from *Bondage*, to oppose *Themselves* their compleat Deliverance, and to be weary of Mercies before perfected to them: *In their Rebellion*, desiring and endeavouring to *Return* back to their former, already forgotten, Miseries they groaned under.

A Case:

A Case no more Unreasonable and Impious than too exactly parallel to our own of this Nation ; whom God hath, in like manner, but just saved *From* rather than *Out* of a *Bondage* (which surely inhaunces the Mercy) and too many of us have (in no less aggravated a *Rebellion*) been plotting to *return*, and undo our selves therewith more irrecoverably again.

A most Prodigious, Unreasonable, Horrid and Impious Folly, and Madness to a *Proverb* ! (*The* Prov. 26.
11. and
2 Pet. 2.
22. *Dog* that *returns* to his *Vomit*, doing but what those *Rebels* propos'd to do, who greedily longed after their nauseated and disgorged Oppressions) which as it stands upon *Record* to the reproach of the *Israelites*, so will it doubtless be *Chronicl'd* to the shame of such of this Age, with all that shall come after.

Concerning it therefore (that such as have any ways shar'd in the Guilt may be truly *Humbled*, and such of us as have been blest in its Defeat may be truly *Thankfull*, and all of us do what lies in our Power to prevent the like for the future, by a more unanimous and steady perseverance in our *Loyalty*) I shall insist upon these Three things ; Considering,

I. The Evil and Folly of the Sin.

II. The Inducements that may be accounted for thereto. And,

III. The Duty incumbent on us for its present Disappointment.

I. *I am to account for the Evil and Folly of the Sin:* Which in the *Text*, was, That in their *Rebellion* against God's Government by *Moses* the *Israelites* appointed (or plotted so to appoint) a *Captain to return*

their Bondage they had so lately and wonderfully been thereby rescued from: And in its *Parallels* (wherein we are concern'd) is, That some, in like manner, of this Nation have *in Rebellion*, both to the Providence of God and the best of Governments, been Conspiring to overturn both, and in the most lawless and bale Methods desperately to involve all in Misery we have so miraculously hitherto been preserved from. The Evil and Folly of both which Instances is apparent in the very *Attempt*, much more in the the *Fact*, and most of all in the *Consequences* thereof.

I. *The Attempt was Unreasonable and Impious*: As opposing the Design of God's Providence and presuming upon its Assistance to contradict it self. For as He was effecting and carrying on *Deliverance*, so were the *Israelites* here contriving again for *Bondage*, in confidence to succeed by the frail Inventions and Endeavours of Man, so as to overthrow what had been effected by the miraculous Power of the Omnipotent God: And what could not be done without so many Miracles, they attempt to undo by their own Contrivance: As if God would work Miracles to make them again Miserable, who had but just been at that expence to deliver them from Misery! For how otherwise could the *Israelites* hope to get into *Egypt*, who got not thence without *Manna* to feed them, a *Cloudy Pillar* to conduct them, and a *Sea divided* and dry'd up to procure them a Passage thro' it; which were all *Miracles* wrought immediately by God for them, and were necessary for their Deliverance, and without which (or some other such Assurances from God) their *Return* would be impossible. For they could not hope to get back without God, who

who were so much obliged to him to get thither, where they now were. And what an impious and unreasonable Attempt was this in the *Israelites*, to propose to do as much by their own Skill and Power, as God had done for them by Miracle!

Nor is the *Rebellion* of the *Male-Contents* in our *Israel* short of a Parallel herein, who's Attempt was not only to overthrow a *Revolution* that was visibly effected by an Over-ruling Providence, but to bring about another in opposition to it, wherein they must hope either to do as much and great things as God, without him, or presume upon him to contradict himself, and to shew himself as signally to help their *Return* into Slavery, as he had done to assist their escape and deliverance from it; Both alike impious and vain to expect from God. For as Man is not a Match to oppose God in his designs, so is he not able to do any thing without his Assistance, nor can he reasonably expect this in any thing that is not according to his Holy Purpose.

Our late *Deliverance* was visibly the work of God (impossible to have ever been effected, in such a manner without an Over-ruling Providence) and is it not impious folly to Attempt the Undoing of it (as it were) in spight thereto; or to hope that God would so far contradict himself as, only for the gratification of a few unreasonable Murmurers, to go back with his own work and be ready to shew himself as visibly in another *Revolution to Slavery*, as he did in that for our *Deliverance* from it; And what then is this in the Attempt, but a *fighting against God*? as being dissatisfied with his Providences towards us, and presuming upon his subjecting his Councils to ours; or else venturing to Act *without* and *against* him, by

undermining and defeating the declared Purposes of his Will ?

What the final *Council of the Lord* is, in this or any other Providential occurrence, none can tell ; But what he hath discovered, and we can tell, it is not for us to oppose or be discontented with: much less to wrest the work out of his hands, and of our own heads plot to *return* whence he hath brought us ; which is to Oppose our Councils and Power to His ; or rather to oppose him to himself, and is Illegal in the very *Attempt* both to the *Israelites* and to our Conspirators. And much more then,

2. *The Fact it self was Wicked* : Being designed in an *Illegal Manner*, to an *ill End*, by *Unjust Means*. For it is said to be done *in Rebellion*, contrary to Faith and Allegiance engaged to the Government ordained by God, in opposition to Authority owned and accepted of by themselves, and which was the Crime as of those *Israelites*, so of our *Delinquents*. For as they had groaned under *their Bondage*, and longed for freedom before Deliverance came, and thanked God for the same after they had it, and submitted themselves to the Authority by which God wrought it out for them ; so no less did These ; whom no remembrance of their former fears, nor sense of their late Joy in the *Revolution*, nor Obligation to the present Government (by Fealty sworn or Protection accepted) could contain in due Obedience ; But, *in their Rebellion* against Heaven and Earth, Interest and Duty, Vows and Obligations) they Conspire the Disturbance and overthrow of the present Settlement ; not to Reform and Amend, or to proceed in our *Deliverance*, But (Oh strange Madness !) *to return to their Bondage* ; Resolving to be Miserable if they may not be just as them-

themselves would be! To so ill a purpose do they do so ill! (and indeed an ill thing cannot be done otherwise) and so unreasonable are the Projects of men, that regard not, or oppose the Council of the Almighty!

And then to bring about this; what is it such stick at? The *Israelites* indeed, *in their Rebellion*, the *Text* tells us, *appointed a Captain to return to their Bondage*: They would no longer submit to Governors of Gods appointment; but would chuse for themselves, as more able and wise to do so (after all that had been done for them) to provide for their better Settlement. Which certainly had Folly and Sin enough in it! But yet herein the *Parallel* seems to outrun the *Original*. For our Conspirators have not only done this, but more. Intending not only to *appoint a New Captain*, and forsake and depose whom God had appointed for them, but Treacherously and Cowardly in cold blood, to Murder and Assassinate their old one (whom they had no fault to find with, but that he was not of their own appointment) whom alone God had made the Instrument of all their Blessings, and only from whom they could expect the continuance thereof to them.

A Villany that no pretence, whatever, can be able to justify! That is not consistent with the Principles of Humane Nature, much less of true Religion! And therefore henceforward the pretences of Conscience must surely be stifled in a Cause that espouseth so unconscionable Designs.

It is the *Apostle's Doctrine* that we must *not do evil* Rom. 3. 8. *that good may come thereof*, [the most blessed consequences not being sufficient to Authorize or Justify a wicked Deed] much less design evil for evil's sake, and attempt a sin in a sinful manner, and Rebel for

Ruine : And therefore this also further illustrates and compleats the Evil and Folly of this Conspiracy (both in the Rebellious *Israelites* and our own Countrey-men) That

3. Lastly. *The Consequences thereof were unavoidably Ruinous and Miserable both to themselves and the whole Nation* : Because it was not only a frustration of *Deliverance*, but a return to *Bondage* that was aimed at. *Egypt* and Slavery was to be the Consequence ; and a subjection to a Government, whence neither *Liberty*, nor *Religion*, nor *Reward* (which are the Dearest things men have to be fond of) but only a *Divine Displeasure and Vengeance* might reasonably be expected.

Exod. 10. 2. 1. *The loss of all Liberty was the certain consequence of such a Return.* For *Egypt* was the *House of the Israelites Bondage* ; the most grievous state of their Affliction, where they found no Mercy, no Compassion ; But were treated as Enemies and Slaves, and subjected to as many Tyrants as they had Governors ; And therefore it was in vain for them to hope to be more at ease there, than where they now were, among men of their own Nation and Profession, and under the Conduct of that Government whereby God had wrought Deliverance for them, and designed them Rest and Liberty ; and whose service was nothing to the drudgeries of a *Brick-kiln*, or confinements of *Prisons* which they under went, and must again expect, if ever they returned into *Egypt* : Which of all Places, (having experienc'd its Cruelty) ought to be dreaded, and least of all aimed at by them. So that Slavery must necessarily have been the Consequence of returning thither.

And

And no better, in Analogy of Reason, was our *Return* design'd to have been in (in respect to the *Liberty* we have recover'd and now enjoy) from a Government that exactly observes the Liberty of the Subject, to a Government that we experienced wofully Arbitrary, and under which we could foresee nothing but Ruine and Slavery. And therefore the Consequence of this, must necessarily have been infinitely for the aggravation of our Grievances and increase of our Complaints; who, if we cannot be content to submit to an easie and limited Government, that suffers and encourages every Man to *sit under his own Vine*, and to possess and enjoy what he hath without Jealousie or Disturbance, should be very unable to bear up under the Insults and Oppressions of the Despotick Power of an irritated conquering Enemy. Therefore doth God threaten such a Slavery as this as a Judgment to his People; *Deut. 28. 47, 48. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God, with joyfulness of heart, for the abundance of all things. Therefore shalt thou serve thy Enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things, and he shall put a yoke of Iron upon thy neck untill he have destroyed thee.* From which, good Lord, continue evermore to deliver us!

2 Nor is there more of Religion than Liberty to be expected in Egypt: Where the Sacrifices of the *Israelites* were an Abomination, and for which therefore they expected to have been stoned, should they have offered them before their Eyes; and insisted hereupon for the necessity of their removing thence into the Wilderness, for their Liberty in Religion, which the *Egyptians* abominated and persecuted them for; and to whom therefore to return now again, was to give

Exod. 8.

26.

give up their Religion, or themselves to suffer for it.

Nor is the Malignity of our Adversaries (from whom we are *delivered*, and have been conspiring to *return*) less to be dreaded by us, than was this of the *Egyptians* by the Children of *Israel*, towards a Profession for the true uncorrupted Service of God. We have had long and repeated Instances of the implacable Malice and Cruelty of *Poper*y against *Protestantism*; which authorizes Princes to *Dragoon* their own Subjects (yea, and dignifies them with the Title of *Eldest Son of the Church* for encouragement to do so) and will dispense with all the most sacred ties of Oaths and Promises, for the propagation of their Faith and Suppression of the *Northern Heresie* (as they Devilishly Nick-name *true Religion*). If therefore we have any kindness for our Profession, it will be impossible to be fond of those that hate it, and once began to enslave us for it; and from whom no Indulgence is to be expected there, any longer than it shall not lie in their Power to hurt.

It was the certain prospect of the impending Ruine to our Religion, that made us seek for security in a Deliverance; and therefore to Conspire a *return* to our former (and much worse) estate, is to betray this Security, and to Sacrifice our Religion to our Indiscretion. For we cannot hope to be received with this which is an *Abomination* to the State we would *return* to: Nor can they be thought but to be weary of their own Religion, who would have the Government in the Power of its worst Enemies, and subject themselves to those that have espoused the Interest of another Religion.

However,

However, could it probably be thought that *Egypt* and Arbitrary Government would remit of the Slavery of their former Servants, and indulge a Religion they abominate (which is an odd Supposition to venture much on) yet after such an Escape and Deliverance, it can very hardly be hoped,

3. *That a Return would be able to secure a Welcome, but rather expose to Revenge and greater Misery.* For the *Israelites* escape cost the *Egyptians* dear (by which they suffered both in their Estates and Lives) and would doubtless render it the harder for them to forgive; and if ever they had got them into their Hands again, have provoked them to have made them pay dearly for it; never trusting whom they had been to great sufferers by; keeping a more strict and jealous Eye to prevent the like escape again; suffering it no more to be in their power ever to hurt them again, than they would be sure to take care of ever encouraging them thereto by connivance or kindness. *A provoked Enemy can never make a good Friend.* And therefore *Israel's* return into *Egypt* could no more secure themselves, than it would oblige their Enemies.

And yet *Israel* might as reasonably think to make Peace with *Egypt* as we with *France* and *Popery*, whose Designs We (and God for us) have hitherto so vigorously oppos'd, and successfully broken all their Measures. Into whose Power could we, upon any Terms, but be once reduc'd (which God forbid!) both *Revenge* and *Inclination* would quickly break all to work our final Destruction. For *Tyranny* and *Persecution* is the very Genius of *Popery*. It is *Egypt's* Constitution to oppress; neither is it alter'd since we were deliver'd from it; nor would our *Return* thither change or abate its Temper to Us, especially, who have so provoked

voked it. 'Tis not safe trusting to a reconciled Enemy, who will continue reconciled but till he can have an opportunity to do Revenge. And this present *French King*, that was set in his Throne by his Protestant Subjects, did therefore, 'tis said, make this his Argument for their Destruction, *That they, who had power to set him up, might not be in a capacity to use it to pull him down again*: And should then the present Discontents and Malignity among us have took effect to have restor'd us to our *Egyptian Bondage*, to be sure it would quickly have been taken out of our Power ever to have deliver'd our selves again; and so our *Return* must necessarily have been to far greater Miseries than we escap'd from. Besides,

4. Lastly, *The Displeasure and Vengeance of God, that undoubtedly follows, and falls justly upon such perfidious Revolters*. For the *False Spies* (who were the chief Conspirators) died by the Plague presently, and God cuts off by degrees all the murmuring *Israelites*, and delays the National Mercy forty Years, till they were all dead that despised it, and raises up a new Generation to inherit the Blessings they had forfeited.

Mercies despised are seldom perfected; and a Rebellious Ingratitude of a present Age, may render themselves unworthy of Blessings designed and begun for them, and deferr them to Posterity.

God will not let one of those enter into the *Promised Land of Canaan*, that had been any ways consenting to a *Return into Egypt*. He will neither bless them with what he *purposed*, nor gratifie them with what they *desired*, but dooms them Vagabonds, to wander out their Lives in a *Wilderness*: Or had he permitted their *Return*, and *Egypt* had receiv'd and cherish'd them, yet even there could he have sent after them,

them, and have destroyed them for their backsliding, and have made them more miserable in the *Success*, than he did in the Disappointment of their Conspiracy.

'Tis fatal to throw off the safe and wise conduct of Providence, which we never oppose or direct, but to our own loss. God will not indure to be controuled by us; neither will he suffer such Presumption to escape some mark of his heavy Displeasure. No Age is without its Monuments of Sufferings for turbulent rebellious Discontent. And that in ours, such are now erecting, is but the usual and just Reward of the same Sin.

Upon which Accounts, so great is the *Madness*, so grievous the *Guilt* of Opposing or Rejecting the *Councils of the Lord* by the *Rebellious Devices of Men*! which is so unreasonable in the *Attempt*, so wicked in the *Fact*, and so very pernicious in its *Consequences*; that tends to the loss of *Liberty*, the extirpation of the *True Religion*, the merciless *Revenge of an insulting Enemy*, and the unavoidable Judgments of a Provoked, Just, and Jealous Deity! And yet such was the Guilt and Folly of the *Israelites*, in Conspiring to return to *Egypt*, after their escape from their *Bondage* in it; and such, no less, of our present Age, in its unreasonable *Murmurers* under the present Government, and the *Rebellious Attempts* that have been now discovered and disappointed of their Conspiracy, to return to their *Bondage* they had so lately been set free from.

Nor is the *Folly* more Parallel than the *Inducements* in both thereto. For as their *Sin* seems too much alike, so is the *Occasion* of it. And therefore consider we also now (which is our next Particular propos'd, viz.)

II. *The Inducements that may be accounted for that betray'd to such Villany.* For the greater the Sin, the greater the Wonder: what should draw Men into it. That so Hellish a Motion should meet with so ready a Reception, and gain to it self so strong a Party, with so much consent among a People so highly favoured, so lately delivered, so signally protected, by wonderful Providence! A People that saw all God's Judgments against *Egypt*, and the Overthrow of *Pharaoh* and all his Host, for their Succour, and without their help! Who found themselves secur'd (by the Defence and Conduct of a Cloud and Fire, by the plentiful and wholesome provision of *Manna* from Heaven, and the miraculous Water from a Cloven Rock) from all the inconveniencies of a barren and perilous Wilderness, and were just ready to enter the promised Land, and within ken of a most desirable Settlement; and yet, after all this, to frustrate and dash at once, what had been so long, and with so great Expence and miraculous Success adoining towards their Felicity, and to attempt, in so rebellious a manner, to return to Misery: As incredible as this seems, yet so it was, and so it may be again, if it may not be said (upon too like *Inducements*) that so it now is; (the like Account being to be given for the like Rebellion now as then) for thus it seems to have happened,

I. *From the falseness of the Spies; who by an evil Report discourage the People, and prejudice them against the Truth and Encouragements that they were employed to have laid before them.* For they are sent into the good Land, to see the goodness thereof, and to make their Report according to what they saw.

saw. And *Joshua* and *Caleb* (who were of their number, and knew as much as any of them) accordingly make their Report faithfully; but the rest falsifying, conceal their Encouragements, and raise Difficulties, and propagate Lyes to serve their own Design, and frustrate the Mercies designed for them.

Nothing usually doth more mischief in a State, than the spreading of false and evil Reports in it; and were it not from the falleness of *Spies*, there would be no colour for *Conspiracies*; (all Rebellions against a Government being founded on its misrepresentations.) 'Tis an evil Report that makes Men evil minded; and 'tis the officiousness of designing *Spies*, that prejudices the People. Had all Men spoke as they had found, and regarded Truth more than Passion and Self-interest in their Representations, it would not have been likely for any to have desired so sudden a change of a Government to which all have been so very much beholden. But we have had *False Spies* among us, who have made it their business to raise and propagate *evil Reports*; (magnifying the Strength and Advantages of our Enemy, and lessening that of our own; meeting to murmur in their Tents; shewing themselves glad at our Losses, and disturb'd at our Advantages; insisting upon Difficulties to make them Impossibilities; working under-hand to obstruct and betray Affairs, and then making it a prejudice to the Government, that things succeed no better, and urging the People to grumble at their Circumstances, which themselves industriously do all they can to hinder from being amended:) Such are the evil Instruments of our publick Disturbances, that draw off the Minds of Subjects from their Duty of Allegiance, and run them upon the most desperate and ruinous Attempts

to cross the Providence of God, and contrive for the disappointment of Blessings design'd for them. From the *evil Reports* that are falsely spread, by some discontented designing *Spies of Canaan*, arises the unreasonable Conspiracy to return into Egypt. And which is also promoted,

2. *From an evil Heart of Unbelief.* A mistrust of God's Power and Goodness to make good his Promise; utterly incapacitating for the benefit of its Completion. For so the *Israelites entred not in because of Unbelief*: God being provoked to leave them who first leave him, and to suffer them to fall by their own Councils, who have not Faith to depend on his. God is able and willing to carry on his own work, and Man is never necessitated to his own shifts. But *Unbelief* is full of Suspicion, that makes Men uneasy and restless to lean to their own Understandings, tho' never so infirm and deceitful, rather than to the Conduct of a wise Providence, tho' never so Omnipotent and Faithfull. Therefore when Difficulties arise, which may be design'd to try and exercise *Faith* (which, standing tryal, is certainly the most prevalent engagement of Omnipotency to overcome such Difficulties for us) then *Hope* is deserted, and *Faith made shipwreck of*, and *Unbelief* begins to argue against all Reason: *He that hath done That, can do This*; so *Faith* argues; but *Unbelief* says, *He hath indeed done That, but can he do This also? Can God furnish a Table in the Wilderness? Behold he smote the Rock, and the Waters gushed out, and the Streams overflowed: Can he give Bread also? can he provide Flesh for his People?* Such is the *Logick of Infidelity*, that never wants Objections against Providence, and renders every Objection insuperable, to the litling of God upon all occasions.

Heb. 3. 19.

Pf. 78. 19,
20.

ons. To its Carnal eye, the work gloriously begun, can never be perfected. As if God that had done, could do no more; or that any thing that was to be done, was greater than what had been done! As if God, who had Plagued *Egypt*, Overthrown *Pharaoh* with all his Host, and so miraculously rescued the Children of *Israel*; Could not as easily drive out the *Canaanites* before them; But that they were now come to their *Nè plus Ultra*, and had already advanced as far as God could conduct them, and were necessitated to shift at last for themselves, and appoint them a Captain to return to their Bondage! As if the strength of the People that dwelt in the Land, was too great for God to conquer for them; or their Walled Cities more impossible to be scaled, than a Sea to be walked through on foot dryshod! Alas! What are the Children of *Anak* more in God's hands, than the *Egyptians*! who can as easily and speedily squeeze their Grand Monarch, as we have heard they have insultingly a poor *Orange*. As if it were a greater thing for God to Settle a Nation than to Deliver it! And finally, as if He that had broken so oft the Designs of *France* upon us, could not, in the end, break the Power of *France* for us; But we must now shift for our selves; And, to atone for what hath been done, endeavour to undo all again; and return our selves into Bondage (thro' a mistrust that our Deliverance cannot be secured to us) in opposition to God's Providence and our Duty: Wrestling the disposal of affairs out of his hands: Committing our selves no longer to his Conduct; but in Rebellion, in Treachery, Violence and Villany, force our way back, as not believing we can go any longer prosperously forward.

Num. 15.

28.

Hence

Hence it is men make so many difficulties and grievances to themselves, and then run upon so many unreasonable extravagances to avoid them. *To him* Mar. 9.23. *that believes, all things are possible*; and to them that once begin to mistrust God nothing seems probable. So that 'tis evidently *Infidelity* that makes men restless and *murmuring* under their present circumstances, and runs them upon such impious and foolish Designs, as are Unreasonable in the *Attempt*, Wicked in the *Fact*, and Destructive in the *Consequence*.

A further (and no less justifiable) account of the sin before us, may also be given,

3. *From an unreasonable Prejudice, "Envy and Spite against the Person God hath made, here, both Deliverer and Governour.* A wicked People cannot heartily love a good Governour; not for any evil they fear from such, but because of the good they malign in them.

Psal. 106. *They envied Moses in the Camp, and Aaron the Saint of the Lord.* They will not be saved by those they hate, whose successes increase their hatred; and are all for returning to the *Tyranny of Pharaoh*, rather than be obliged to their greatest Benefactor, and submit to the Government of God by *Moses*, the *Meekest of Men*.

Plutarch. Thus *Themistocles* and *Aristides* were both driven out of their Country, only for their eminent service for it. The Prædominancy of Vice cannot indure the Opposition of Vertue. The *Israelites* would hardly ever have thought of *Egypt* for their *Asylum*, were it not for good *Moses*, whom they cannot love because he is holy and good and would have them be so too, and will not suffer them in their badness. Therefore to gratify Revenge and indulge Spight, is Slavery to the worst of Tyrants prefer'd to Security and Liberty under the most gentle Government that seeks our
Good

Good, and would make us Good. And this further suggests another Reason of so Unreasonable an Attempt; Even:

4. Lastly. *From an Impious malignity and seeming dread of being Reformed from our Vices.* For *Egypt*, tho' an *House of Bondage* to their Bodies, was yet a Freedom to their Lust's; Where no religious Restraints were laid upon them; but so they performed their Duty to their *Task-Masters*, they had not only Liberty but Encouragement to neglect and despise the service of God: Whereas the present Government they were under had procured them strict Laws and Holy Statutes, and put them in Execution for the promotion of Piety and Religious Exercises; and tho' it had free'd them from Bodily Slavery, yet it restrain'd them sinful Liberty; And if ever they were come to be settled in their *Land of Rest*, they knew they were to expect more strictness and severity in Religious matters; which was very ungrateful to corrupt Nature, and made them willing to turn their backs on *Canaan* rather than on their *Lusts*, and prefer Slavery in *Egypt* before the service of God in *Canaan*.

How much this impious Motive may have influenc'd the Revolters in our *Israel* (tho' it be not Charity to judge, yet) it is too apparent not to be took notice of, from the professed looseness and vicious Lives of the Majority of those who have all along appeared most disaffected to this present Government. All may pretend Conscience, but few of them have afforded us the testimony of a good Life for their regard to any.

God be Thanked! *The Rebellion* is not so General among us, as it was among the *Israelites*; But one cannot but observe those who have been concern'd in it,
to

to be the very worst of Men (*Papists* and *Atheists* ; Men of the worst, or Men of no Religion) and therefore most likely to be induced thereto, from their hatred to Vertue and fears of Reformation.

Such then is the Impiounes of the Villany, and the Unreasonableness of the Inducements which may be supposed to lead to it. We are next of all to consider (as briefly as may be)

III. Lastly. *The Duty now incumbent on us for its present disappointment.* And that surely is,

1. *To detest and disclaim the Guilt of such Sin.* Because the more malignant the Plague, the further distance will every man in his wits endeavour to flee from it. No Wise nor Good man but would be unwilling to be defiled by his too near approach to such filthy Practices. A Villany of such grossness can not be decry'd nor declaimed too much against. The very occasions of it should henceforward be more abominable to us. Neither can it become us now to sit *Neuter*, much less to *approve*, but to *oppose* our selves to the Cause that needs or countenances such unjustifiable Courses. And since there is such Villany among us, it concerns us the rather to distinguish our selves, by readily *Associating* with those that disclaim it ; by sedulously clearing our selves from all suspicions that we may formerly have lain under ; and entering our Protestations against approving or abetting, or any way being concern'd in so foul a Crime. And yet, tho' we never so much Detest the Crime, we should hence be moved also

2. *To Compassionate and Pray for such as are involved in it.* Because the more hainous the Guilt, the more wretched the Sinner, and the more an object of our Pity

Pity and Intercessions to God for him. That Humane Nature should be so stain'd, is Deplorable : That any of our Fellow-Creatures should so abuse Reason and Conscience is more so : But that our Fellow-Subjects and Christians should be so devoid of Grace and Humanity is most of all sad and miserable. In such, we see the Misery Sin exposes to, and the Weakness of Nature to preserve it self, and the great dependance we have continually on the preventing and assisting Grace of God ; And if others fall while we stand, it is not becoming such as we are to be *high minded*, but the rather to *fear*.

Such sins therefore of others ought to make us more careful over our selves, and to compassionate their Miscarriages to which we were so obnoxious our selves. No man's Misfortune deserves our Insults, tho' the Occasion may justly our blame. His *Sin* that made him miserable is to be detested, but the *Misery* it makes him suffer deserves our Pity.

It now therefore becomes us to Compassionate the Guilt and Sufferings, which the unbridled Madness and Blindness of these Sinners hath insnared them in ; and to recommend their Misfortune to the God of Pity, to open their Eyes to a due sense of their Error, and to break their Hearts into a sincere Contrition for their Guilt, and to fit them for, and support them under, and sanctify to them the sufferings they have procured to themselves in this World, so as to avoid those eternal Torments they have reason to expect, otherwise, will await them in the next World.

Neither, while we are thus concern'd for *Their Sin*, ought we to be unmindful of our own. And, therefore, further, hence it becomes us also

3. *To be Humbled for our own sins, which have threaten'd us with such a Judgment from other men's.* For it is for *Those* that God permits *These* to threaten or afflict us with an Injury ; He designing our *Punishment* by their *Guilt*. And therefore now we see the Danger and Ruin we were brought just upon the Brink of, by others Treachery ; it should make us reflect upon our own Guilt that hath provoked God to raise up such turbulent and false Rebels among us, and permitted them to design and carry on their Conspiracy so far, as to endanger our *Liberty, Laws* and *Religion* thereby. The *Fault* is theirs, but the *Warning* is ours. And tho' our *Reprieve* is obtain'd, yet nothing but an unfeigned Repentance can secure us a Pardon.

The Danger we were in is graciously discover'd to us, to let us see our demerits, and to provoke us to a Reformation, which is the only Terms upon which we may promise to our selves safety ; without which God can easily reduce us into the like or worse danger, and deny us any more such Deliverance. Our *Enemie's Disappointment* then, must be our Warning ; lest our continued impenitency may give them *Success* against us, for the Punishment of our Sins which their Disappointment could not warn us to Reform. Therefore it is not so much the *Injury* they design'd us, as our *Sins*, that provoked God to permit them to design any against us, that (upon such Discovery and Disappointment) we ought chiefly to oppose our selves, and be humbled for.

God will preserve us, if we will not be wanting to preserve our selves from Sin ; which is the only Enemy we need to fear ; and which we have a great deal of Reason to fear, even from an Apprehension of the Miseries it so lately threaten'd us with, and had certainly

tainly executed upon us, had not God stept in between, to save us yet longer from long since deserved Destruction. 'Tis fatal to persist in such Provocations, And, having received yet another Deliverance, it the more concerns us, now at length, to be more wary of presuming to weary out Divine Patience to no purpose, and to *Sin now no more, lest a worse thing come next unto us.* And hence, then, how can we but own our Obligation further,

4. *To be truly Thankful to God for our present Deliverance.* It being only his Mercy and undeserved Forbearance towards us, that hath granted us a longer Respite (who have long since deserved Ruin) and continues his *Warnings*, when our *Punishment* was foready to fall down on our heads, and which nothing but the watchfull eye of Providence could have rescued from ! 'Twas only God (*in whose hands the hearts of all men are to turn as the Rivers of Water*) that turned the hearts of some of the *Conspirators* themselves to become our *Deliverers* : Fetching Good out of Evil ; and, by a miracle of Providence, securing both our *Church* and *State* in the Trust only of those, that were pitch'd upon as fittest to be entrusted with the perpetration of the worst of Villanies !

For what greater Evil could men contrive, or have we to fear, than *the Assassination of his Majesty's person, to make way for a foreign Invasion, whereby to enslave both our Bodies and Souls !* Yet this is what was designed for us, and what God hath shewn himself so signally in the Discovery of what we are now Assembled here to return him Thanks for.

To Him therefore be render'd all the Praise, and our heartiest Thanks for this his infinite Goodness to us ! That he still shews his Almighty Hand in our De-

fence, by which he wrought out, at first, our Deliverance! That he hath hitherto prevented our *Return to Bondage*, and still continues us on the Borders of the *Land of Rest*, and hath not yet, after all, taken from us our Hopes of a seasonable entrance and happy settlement therein! That He hath preserved to us his own *Anointed, the Breath of our Nostrils*, and the *Light of Israel*, continuing the same miraculous Providence that hath shewn it self in so many wonderfull Deliverances, thro' the whole course of his Life, to encircle still his Head, both as an *Ornament* and *Helmet*, bespeaking him no less the Darling and Care of Heaven, than exposing him to be the Envy and Wonder of Earth! *Oh that Men would therefore praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men!* That he doth for his Anointed! And hath now once more done for Us in preserving him from those bloody Designs which nothing but his own Infinite Wisdom and Power could have discovered and defeated! *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us; but unto thy Name be ascribed all Honour, Glory and Praise*, with most humble and hearty Thanks in all Churches of the Saints: Even so, *Blessed be the Lord our God, who only doth wondrous things; and blessed be the Name of his Majesty for ever!*

This surely is our Duty hence to *Heaven*, whence our Mercy comes; and which, if duly perform'd, will influence our Behaviour here towards his *Vicergerent* on *Earth*, to whom it more immediately was directed. For this, finally, instructs us,

5. Lastly, *To Confirm and Strengthen more our Loyalty to the present Government for the future.* For to this end God seems to have brought it into so Eminent Danger, and to have so eminently rescued it there-

therefrom; to let us see its Worth, and how dear it is to Him, and to endear it hereby to us. For *the true worth of a Mercy is never valued, we say, till lost*: And therefore, tho' we have not yet lost ours, yet by the Danger it was in to be lost, God hath made us very sensible of the Evil it would have been to us; and hereby hath taught us the more to value it.

Let us therefore, at last, persuade our selves not only to be *reconciled* to the Government God hath put us under, and would do us good by; but to *endear* it to us, and unite and firmly *Associate* our selves to defend and support it, since God appears so eminently for it, and calls to us by such repeated Providences to do so too. Let us look up to God, and take our measures from him; to submit to his *Councils*, and quietly to permit him to govern the World and Us, by the *Captain* of his own *appointment*: Laying aside our Prejudices and Passions, Rancor and *Rebellion*; let us, at least, hearken to the seasonable Advice of *Gamaliel*, Act. 5. 35, 38, 39. *Ye Men of Israel, take heed to your selves. what ye intend to do as touching these Men. — Refrain from these Men, and let them alone; for if this Council or this Work be of Men, it will come to naught: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*

If ever Prince in the World was own'd to be of God, then surely is Ours; by a continued Succession of such Providences to *Preserve* him and *Disappoint* his Enemies. And may God still continue the same Miracle of Protection of him to us! And add One more, in uniting all the Hearts and Affections of this whole Nation to him! that so he may henceforward, without any Discouragement or Interruption

g^o

go on to perfect the Deliverance he is engag'd in for us; and not only secure us from ever *returning* again in *Rebellion*, to *Bondage*; but speedily bring us into the *Land of Rest* (our *Sins* hitherto have only delay'd our entrance into) and secure to us, inviolably, our *Religion* and *Rights* by a lasting advantageous *Peace*; and after a long and happy Reign on Earth, be late admitted to a Glorious and Everlasting Kingdom in Heaven! And let all the People say, *Amen*.



F I N I S.

